

REMARKS

Claims 6 and 7 are added, and therefore claims 4 to 7 are pending in the present application.

It is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the acknowledgement of the claim for foreign priority. As requested on page 2 of the Office Action, it is respectfully submitted that a certified copy of the German application is believed to have been provided by the International Authority. Please confirm whether it has been received. If not received, a copy will be provided if necessary.

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the previously filed Information Disclosure Statement, PTO-1449 paper and cited reference(s).

While the amended drawings filed with the Preliminary Amendment of January 5, 2001 were objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.84 or 1.152, no reason was given in the drawings objections sheet as to what the precise objection was. Accordingly, the drawings objections is traversed.

Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,696,840 ("Ulmer") and U.S. Patent No. 5,410,253 ("Evans").

Claim 4 has been rewritten to correct the antecedent basis. Claim relates to a device for triggering at least two ignition circuits, the device including a positive output stage assigned to each one of the two ignition circuits, a negative output stage assigned to each one of the two ignition circuits, a drive circuit assigned to each one of the positive output stages, and negative output stages, and a diagnostic unit assigned to each one of the positive output stages and negative output stages. Claim 4 provides that *a first pair of positive output stage and a negative output stage is provided on a common substrate*, and that *a second pair of positive output stage and a negative output stage is provided on the common substrate*, and that, for each ignition circuit, a positive output stage and a negative output stage from different pairs are provided.

It is respectfully submitted that "Ulmer" and "Evans", whether taken alone or combined, do not disclose or suggest the "common substrate" features of claim 4. Instead, "Ulmer" refers to a cross-coupling between output stages of different pairs being situated on *different* substrates so as to ensure a higher reliability, and "Evans" refers to an unrelated device for operating a combustion engine, which lacks cross-coupling and only involves a

simplified analysis of a time relationship between negative and positive ignitions signals.
Accordingly, the combination of "Ulmer" and "Evans" does not render claim 7 unpatentable.

Claim 5 depends from claim 4, and is therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 4.

In view of all of the foregoing, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

New claims 6 and 7 add no new matter and are fully supported by the present application, including the Specification. News claim 6 and 7 depend from claim 4 and are therefore allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 4.

Accordingly, claims 4 to 7 are allowable.

Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. It is therefore respectfully requested that the objections and rejections be withdrawn. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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3/8/2006

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